

March 7, 2013 Budget Committee Minutes

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BUDGET COMMITTEE

MINUTES

THURSDAY MARCH 7, 2013

7:00 P.M.

MEETING ROOM

Al Ahlers, John Cornish, Pam Ames, Clark Whittier, Candy Burgess

Brian Sites (arrived at 7:10pm), Charlene Tschida (arrived at 7:10pm) Donna Palmer, Jeff Shorey, Donna Palmer

Selectmen: Steve Palmer, Darla Hamlin

- **Approval of Minutes of the February 28, 2013 Meeting**

Pam Ames moved and John Cornish seconded to approve the minutes.

The vote was unanimous

Candy Burgess abstained as she was absent from the meeting.

- **Approval of Minutes of the February 13, 2013 Meeting**

Clark Whittier moved and Donna Palmer seconded to approve the minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous.

Pam noted the following changes:

Brian Sites and Candy Burgess were absent from this meeting but not noted.

Harold Stoddard is the name of the resident present.

The chipper purchase amount is \$26,000.

Gravel creation discussion -eliminate the Mill Road reference.

Jeff Shorey commented on the committee's meeting timeline to complete their work.

The following were planned: March 21st-7pm, March 28th-7pm and April 4th-7pm.

- **Presentation by Town Office Manager** **15 minutes**

Debbie Grover stated that payroll related to elections was moved to this line item (referencing **line 38, Elections/Moderator**)

She also gave an overview of some of the other expenses related to elections.

Ballots & Machine Contract (line 40). This line item is based on the state's decision for the necessary requirements, equipment and formatting for conducting elections. There is an additional fee for an additional ballot machine since they are required to keep state and local ballots separate.

Postage for absentee ballots has not changed (line 41) and there is still the June election to plan for in this fiscal cycle.

Legal Notices (line 43). This item has been increased due to the upcoming elections. John asked about the frequency of legal notices in various areas of the budget. Marnie stated that the requirements have changed and are required to be more detailed. Marnie and Barbara indicated that the costs vary based on the paper and they appear in particular papers based on types of notices required.

Training and Mileage (line 45). The increase is in part to additional travel required for elections training. Steve Palmer asked if there is additional staffing required during this time. Marnie stated that in general, other employees cover the office while others are at trainings.

Debbie gave an overview of the cemeteries (beginning on **line 322, under Public Lands/Recreation**).

She stated that she needs new software to manage the cemeteries (**line 327**) and what she is currently using is not sufficient enough. She has requested 3 quotes and has only heard from one thus far at \$6,000. The new software will integrate maps related to the lots including tracking veteran graves, and the like. Obituaries can be scanned and included with lot numbers for more accurate recording. At present there are thousands of plots in the various cemeteries in town. Clark asked if this funding can be part of the technology accounts. Debbie stated that Marnie has suggested this. Jeff asked if there is any compatibility for future use (IE: Excel). The purchase price is a combination of hardware/software with an annual maintenance cost of \$700 annually.

Payroll related to Cemeteries. Steve asked if Debbie's payroll is in cemeteries section of the budget. Debbie stated that her payroll is under administration. Steve suggested considering information in the future on the impact for her work with cemeteries.

John asked if fees will be raised for plots and maintenance to offset the increases. Marnie stated that cemeteries have a separate commission who establish fees etc. If there are additional fees they can transfer it if they wish. Monies for sales of lots and perpetual care must be kept in a separate account. Interest can be used but the principal must remain in trust. She suggested that the Selectmen have a conversation with the commissioners to work on this. Darla Hamlin stated that the town is required by state law to maintain perpetual care for cemeteries. Pam asked if Debbie will check on the software references.

Steve asked about the increase in line 328. Debbie stated that she is now part of the New England Cemetery Association and the conferences are located outside Maine. Some conferences are required. Darla asked if her participation is beneficial to the town. Debbie stated that much of the information is helpful in better understanding a better way to process records, veterans' records and the like. She has found out about a number of vendors who provide cemetery services and products at a discount etc.

There was a discussion on line 329 related to supplies (flags, markers, mower supplies and the like). At present there is no amount included. There was a discussion on the budgeting of a mower. Debbie stated that in the past, public works handled the mowers and the commission would put available monies back towards the cost of the mowers. It was agreed to tentatively place \$1300 in that line item for the time being.

Barbara gave an overview of **Planning Board (line 75)** and that peer review costs are offset by fees.

Pam asked if supplies can be cut. Barbara stated that the supply costs are due to the codification books, ordinance changes (IE: land use) that may require new printing due to state law requirements. She also indicated that Charter Commission may require codification to be included in the codification books. Clark Whittier stated that the Commission has \$10,000 which will help with costs.

Line 92 /Code Enforcement. Barbara stated that the costs are based on 35 hours a week for payroll and employee benefits. Other line items are nominal. The state doesn't offer as many free trainings as it once did and now there are more paid sessions required for re-certification. She outlined the various categories required for training and re-certification.

Jeff asked about mileage. Barbara stated that it covers trainings, inspections and any other travel for her job.

The software line item is for the license now required.

Revenue/Fees Statistics: Barbara stated that building and land use fees were increased in 2010. Electrical fees were increased in 2012 once the new electrical codes were adopted. Septic fees were increased in 2011. The state has increased these fees with 25% of these fees going to the state. There was a discussion on the actual fees collected to date. (Reviewing **lines 36-52 of the Anticipated Non-Property Revenue report**).

There was a discussion on the cell phone costs. The Board of Selectmen recently decided to provide 4 cell phones on a plan with voice and texting only rather than reimburse people for using their personal phones for town business.

There was also a discussion on construction trends in the community and the quantity allowed in the Farm and Forest District.

- **Presentation by Chair of Recreation Committee**

15 minutes

Jennie Tuemmler indicated that there is not a lot of change from last year (referencing **Public Lands/Recreation, Parks, lines 295-310**). There was a discussion on mowing and their locations within the community (it includes a couple of parks and some trails). There are no new plans/initiatives for next season. Some monies planned last year for projects will go into a capital reserve account (listed as

repairs to OTHP) for future projects which will be a town park. There was a discussion on the repairs to the Old Town House Park. As an advisory committee, any of their recommendations must go before the Selectmen for approval. Jennie stated that her perspective is that it will be up to the residents to determine what they are looking for in development and that Sharp Field may or may not be a part of this. Charlene asked about bike trails. Jennie said some of the trails permit bikes with the exception of Old Town House Park.

Jeff asked about the Eagle Scout project line item. Jennie stated that there are some funds for a project but at present no projects have come up. Clark asked if these funds can be carried over to next year.

Steve asked about line 304 for fence repairs. Jennie stated that this amount should be in another category for a sign at Westcustugo Hall, therefore, it should be under line 301. Marnie stated that the group needs to be careful with the sign sizes if they want to pursue this at some point.

- **Question and Answers**

30 minutes

John asked a number of further questions about cemeteries. Marnie stated that they are generally loss leaders given that there are state laws requiring maintenance and the finances around them. It has an ebb and flow. She stated that there is a requirement to provide information to the public on burials.

Clark asked about a decision point to **line 5** related to the **Administrative Assistant**. Darla stated that the decision point will be finalized at the next Selectmen's meeting. Steve suggested for this purpose, adding approximately \$3,000 would be appropriate at this time.

Pam asked about Bank Service Charges as she commented that last year there were notes indicating that the costs could be less.

The **in-house consultant** line item (**line 21**) is currently being used now. Marnie stated that job descriptions in a standardized format are being created which the town needs vis a vis reviews, personnel policy wages and the like. This process will create consistency and accuracy. There was a discussion on the role of the personnel committee's role.

There was a discussion on the potential charter change for a Town Manager and that there could be additional associated costs.

Charlene asked about **line 23** for **software contract & maintenance** as there is an increase. Marnie stated that some of it is for back-up systems, TRIO system software, as well laptop computer and

photocopier fees. She also commented on **copy overage fees (line 17)**.

Pam asked about **line 22, equipment contracts**. Marnie stated that she will get them the breakdown.

Line 32 Annual Report. At present, a postcard will be sent to residents to let them know about the annual report and where it is available unless the charter commission's work would be included as an insert and mailed.

Line 52, Software Contract/Web- Marnie stated that this is work with a consultant and communications committee to improve the town's web page to make it more user friendly. Donna stated that the consultant's objective is to help create templates that town staff can do.

Line 69-70- Assessing software. Marnie stated that this is for a software fee for the revaluation and an integrated web based assessment of property. It is free for the first revaluation project and then there is a fee for subsequent ones. The assessor is a contracted position going until the end of November to allow time for the tax commitment.

Line 85-Charter Commission. Marnie stated that if the Charter Commission needs more time, some of the funds will be carried over. If they do complete the work and they issue a final report, then they would exist for an additional 30 days, then be disbanded. Clark reminded the group that there would costs for printing, mailing the charter as well as legal review.

Line 314, Royal River Trust- Pam asked if it is a donation. Marnie stated that in essence it is a donation for some of the work they do for the town.

John asked if all the blank lines will be filled in for the next meeting. Marnie stated that the Selectmen should have everything by then but Economic Development may only be ready for March 28th. Steve gave an overview of some of the items the Selectmen are reviewing.

There was a discussion on Marnie working on some projections. Marnie stated that the large items have been considered and there are some items that need to be discussed including the unassigned fund.

- **Committee Discussion - Recommendation**

15 minutes

Decision points and revenues will be discussed at the March 21st meeting.

Pam suggested getting a comparison of what if scenarios.

Social service requests will be addressed and decided on March 21st.

- **Discuss joint meeting with BOS re: Fire/Rescue** **5 minutes**

Jeff asked if any decisions were made. Steve stated that no decisions were made but they will have information for the March 21st meeting.

- **Conclusion** **5 minutes**

Clark Whittier moved and Charlene Tschida seconded to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting ended at 9:41pm.